PASTORAL ADVICE
TO A
YOUNG PERSON
LATELY
CONFIRMED
BY THE
BISHOP.

2 Cor. I. 21, 22.

Now he who CONFIRMETH us with you in CHRIST, and hath anointed us, is GOD; who hath alſo ſealed us, and given the earneſt of the Spirit in our hearts.

TERTULL. *de Reſurrect. Corp.* C. VIII.

The fleſh is ſhadowed by the *Impoſition of hands*, that the ſoul may be enlightned by the HOLY GHOST.

The ELEVENTH EDITION.

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BRITISH
MUSEUM

PASTORAL ADVICE

To a Young Perſon lately CONFIRMED.

SINCE you are now come to a competent ſtate of reaſon, my Brother, and have given a noble proof of it, in that you have deliberately choſen, and publickly confeſſed the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as your avowed Prince and Saviour, and have ratified it in a moſt ſolemn manner at your late Confirmation, according to the ancient uſage of the Church of Chriſt; the goſpel of our Lord does now aſſure you, that you are in a true way of the moſt comfortable life, and moſt bleſſed death that man is capable of, if you faithfully perſevere in this covenant-ſtate of GOD's grace, thro' our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. For you have hereby devoted yourſelf wholly to GOD, *whoſe favour is better than life*, and have laid the ground-work of that goſpel holineſs which has *the promiſes of this life, and that which is to come.* You have alſo juſtly renounced the ſhameful and dreadful ſlavery of the devil, together with all thoſe ſnares which he prepares for immortal ſouls, by the indulgence of *worldly and carnal luſts:* inſtead of which, you have profeſſedly choſen the excellent laws of GOD, as your complete and perpetual rule, in the keeping of which

there is great peace here, and there will be great reward hereafter.

O, what tongue can tell us, how much better it is to yield a chearful and ſteady obedience to the all-wiſe and all-good GOD, as his dutiful and beloved children, than to wander after the amuſements of our own fooliſh imaginations, and to be hurried by the blind and brutal emotions of our extravagant luſts and paſſions, like abandoned prodigals! We dare appeal to the breaſts of the moſt enormous ſinners, whether it be not infinitely more ſweet and ſatisfactory, more comely and advantageous, to be guided by the *good Spirit of God*, than to be managed by the *malicious powers of darkneſs*? and whether in all times of danger and ſerious reflection, they do not wiſh to change conditions with the virtuous and upright perſon?

This demonſtrates the real excellency of ſound religion, and manifeſts your great diſcretion in making it your choice; and let me preſs you with all poſſible vehemency, never to ſwerve from it. Since the Lord of heaven and earth hath vouchſafed to enter into a covenant of life and peace with you, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in which he hath engaged all the glorious attributes of his Godhead for your ſupport, comfort and happineſs in both worlds, in theſe words, *I will be to you a God.* O love him with all your ſoul, my Brother, and ſerve him with all your might, through the aids of his grace, whilſt you have any being, that

that ſo you may have the infinite honour and comfort of being one of his people; for this is our life, our hope, our ſalvation; and to ſwerve from theſe bleſſed paths, is to go down to eternal darkneſs and deſtruction.

Let me therefore prevail with you, my Brother, as one that ſincerely watcheth and travaileth for the good of your ſoul, to *ſeek the kingdom of God* in the firſt place; making it your chief concern to keep ſteadfaſt in that ſtate of divine favour to which his covenant of grace admits you. And that I may, as your ſpiritual Paſtor, conduct you in the ways that lead thereto, I ſhall,

I. Give you a few directions to preſerve you in a dutiful regard to GOD's holy will, according to your chriſtian vows.

II. I ſhall lay before you the dreadful guilt of apoſtatizing from theſe ſacred engagements, that you may not be of thoſe that *draw back unto perdition.*

III. I ſhall remind you of the unſpeakable happineſs of thoſe who perſevere in the faithful diſcharge of their vows to GOD; that I may encourage you in the ways of virtue and religion, and, under Chriſt the chief Shepherd, fix and confirm you therein.

IV. I ſhall conclude with ſerious reflections upon the whole. To all which, I moſt earneſtly beſeech the holy Spirit of GOD to vouchſafe his bleſſing.

I begin with a few directions, in order to your pious and prudent conduct in that Chriſtian courſe of life, which you have vowed to GOD. As to which, in the firſt place,

1. Labour to awaken in your breaſt a juſt ſenſe of the infinite honour, advantage, and comfort of a covenant-alliance with almighty GOD; by which a frail and needy creature has the honour of being joined in a covenant of friendſhip and peace with his Creator; which is like a poor beggar's being married to ſome illuſtrious Prince, or a condemned criminal's being made the adopted heir of ſome great Emperor; yea, it excels all compariſon. This world has nothing glorious enough to repreſent the tranſcendent excellency of ſpiritual regeneration, the infinite honour of communion with GOD, and the immenſe treaſure of the promiſes of the goſpel. Theſe are ſuch ſurpaſſing enjoyments, that the crowns and ſcepters of this world are but ſhadows to them, and all the carnal pleaſures and profits upon earth, no better than odious dung in compariſon with them.

Let it therefore be your earneſt care, my Brother, to keep your heart duly affected with the infinite love of GOD to men, in his covenant of Grace and Mercy with them, through a Redeemer; and let it be the chief buſineſs of your life to act ſuitably to the great mercies and ſtrict engagements of this covenant. Remember that you are baptized *in the Name of the*

the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghoſt; and that as this intitles you to many unſpeakable privileges, ſo it lays upon you many neceſſary duties. For as this gives you a covenant-relation to the almighty Creator and Governor of the world, and an intereſt in him as your covenant-ally, ſo it engages you to render a ſupreme love, honour, and regard to him, revering his infinite majeſty, magnifying the riches of his mercy, obeying his holy will, reſting ſatisfied in all the diſpenſations of his providence, and endeavouring in all things to glorify his holy name. And, in like manner, whereas this bleſſed covenant gives you a federal relation to, and intereſt in the only begotten Son of GOD, as your Saviour and Redeemer; it likewiſe engages you to embrace him truly and effectually in his divine perſon and ſaving offices; to accept that perfect revelation of the will of GOD, which he hath made in the goſpel, as the complete rule of your faith and life; to truſt in the ſufficiency of his mediation and merit for your pardon and peace with GOD, according to the terms of the goſpel; and to reſign yourſelf up to him as your ſpiritual director and governor, by faith deriving ſpiritual wiſdom, affection, and ſtrength from him, as knowing that of his *fulneſs we receive grace for grace*. And finally, as your Chriſtian Baptiſm gave you a covenant-relation to, and intereſt in the holy ſpirit of GOD, as your Sanctifier and Comforter, ſo it engages you

to ſeek his divine gifts and operations in a diligent and due manner, and in the appointed means; and that you thankfully accept and cheriſh all his gracious vouchſafements; truſting in the aid and efficacy of his grace, as the only ſufficient means of producing, preſerving, and advancing that Chriſtian knowledge, holineſs, and obedience in you, which the goſpel requires, as the neceſſary qualifications of a new creature.

Theſe are ſome of the vital acts of a ſaving faith, and herein conſiſts the very conſtitution of every Chriſtian that is in covenant and in favour with GOD; who being reconciled to him by the blood of his only Son, and "born "anew by the transforming power of his quick-"ning Spirit," and being fortified by the continual ſuccours of his grace, is enabled to vanquiſh temptations, and to mortify corruption, to deny himſelf, and take up his croſs; and, in a word, *he can do all things through Chriſt that ſtrengthens him.*

Now therefore, my dear Brother, know and conſider the happy circumſtances of your preſent ſtate, which will never return again, in their full excellency, if you break from the arms of your Redeemer, and again ſell yourſelf to commit iniquity. You are now entered into GOD's vineyard in the morning of your age, and all things ſeem to favour your happy progreſs in the ways of his commandments; wherefore, give all diligence in the work of your Chriſtian calling, with full aſſurance

that

that every thing which GOD has either promiſed or threatned, will be made good to a tittle. So that I may ſeaſonably apply myſelf to you in the words of dying King *David* to his ſon *Solomon*, 1 *Chron.* xxviii. 9. "Now "therefore, my ſon, know the GOD of thy "father, and ſerve him with a perfect heart, "and a willing mind: for the Lord ſearcheth "all hearts and underſtandeth the imagina-"tion of the thoughts. If thou ſeek him, he "will be found of thee; but if thou forſake "him, he will caſt thee off for ever."

Be not deceived, my Brother, *God cannot be mocked* by the moſt ſpecious hypocriſy. You muſt conſecrate a ſincere heart to him, or you give him nothing. He will not be pleaſed with the ſkin of a ſacrifice, inſtead of a whole burnt-offering. Your late vow of obedience, without ſuitable practice, will be ſo far from commending you to GOD, that it will inflame his wrath againſt you, and increaſe your condemnation: for he ſays of his eſpouſed people of old, *Heb.* viii. 9. "They continued "not in my covenant, and I regarded them not."

It is certainly the moſt awful and tremendous thing in the world, to enter into the bonds of this holy covenant of GOD. What an important and affecting concern is it, for a frail corrupt creature, cloathed with infirmities, and ſurrounded with temptations, to make ſolemn vows of perpetual ſervice and faithfulneſs to the all-knowing and all-pure GOD, which, without the acceptable media-

tion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the aids of his holy Spirit, could never be attempted with any hope of success: and therefore, that person is perfectly senseless that enters into these solemn engagements without reverence and godly fear.

If you have therefore been duly affected in this great transaction with your Maker at your late confirmation, my Brother, you cannot soon forget it. If you had been sealing your indentures with an earthly master, wherein you had engaged yourself to serve him but for the space of seven years, you would not have thought yourself at liberty to have done what you list after such an engagement, but you would set yourself to know what your master would have you do, and how you might please him; and this would be your duty and your wisdom. And surely nothing but rank infidelity can make you less careful to serve and please GOD after such solemn vows as you have made with him, considering the strictness and perpetuity of your covenant-engagements, and the infinite honour and advantage of keeping steadfast in them; which was the first direction that I proposed to lay before you, in which I have been the more large, because the clear knowledge of your baptismal covenant is one of the most necessary parts of Christian instruction; and a full conviction of the advantages of this covenant, is the likeliest way to engage your care and concern to preserve the hope of it. But because

cauſe I intend to be as brief as I may, I will give a more ſpeedy diſpatch to that which remains to be conſidered.

2. Let the glorious attributes of GOD, which are brightly diſplayed in the creation and government of the world, and in the redemption, ſanctification, and glorification of ſinful men, be your daily meditation, till you feel a ſtrong habit of devotion and affection towards GOD kindled up in your ſoul, through his grace. The whole body of religion turns upon this one principle of *faith working by love*; for then you cannot but adore his infinite majeſty, and admire his infinite perfections; you will be zealous for his honour, and diligent in his ſervice: and all this will go on with pleaſure and delight; becauſe the victorious love of GOD introduces as it were a new nature into the Soul, and makes it long after the means and ſeaſons of communion with GOD, "as the hart panteth after the wa-"ter-brooks."

3. And as you ever deſire to attain or preſerve this predominant affection towards GOD, or do any thing effectually in religion, be ſure to keep up the lively and ſpiritual exerciſe of daily prayer, and the ſtrict and ſerious obſervance of the Lord's day. And remember, that all the holy ordinances of the Chriſtian religion are the channels, by which the grace and mercy of GOD deſcends upon our ſouls; wherefore be ſure to attend upon them all in their ſeaſon, with diligence, and with a lively faith.

4. Let

4. Let no day pass without reading some part of GOD's holy word, and that with serious application of mind; and make use of other pious and practical * books, as your circumstances admit. But be sure to be well advised as to the books you read, and be careful to fix the sound doctrine of them in your mind, by serious recollection, meditation, and prayer; beseeching GOD "to write his laws in "your heart, by his Spirit," and to give you a vigorous and efficacious Faith in all the parts of his revealed will. This is a sure way to advance in spiritual knowledge and affections, because the gracious Spirit of GOD will be ready to operate upon us, by those means which he hath appointed for these desirable ends. And forasmuch as GOD is the author of all good, you must always, in the most devout manner, ascribe to him the glory of all those spiritual, as well as temporal gifts, wherewith he is pleased to favour you.

5. Refrain from idleness, ill company, and all foreseen occasions of sin, and keep an habitual watch and conscientious guard upon yourself, and all your ways, in the fear of GOD. And though you may perhaps see the generality of the world doing otherwise, let not this incline you *to run with the multitude to do evil*, but choose rather to be of that *little flock*, to whom GOD hath promised a *kingdom*.

* See Bishop KIDDER's *Young Man's Duty*, and NELSON's *Practice of True Devotion*.

6. Be

6. Be very careful to oppose the first inroads of sinful thoughts, by turning your mind towards GOD and good things; and whilst you live be careful to beat down and mortify all sinful lusts and passions, especially such as most agree with your natural temper and constitution. You may be sure, that the flesh will not only shew its feebleness in performing that which is good, but its proneness to comply with that which is evil. You must therefore constantly remember your vows to GOD, against all indulgence of *the sinful lusts of the flesh*, and keep strait reins upon your carnal appetites, "looking to Jesus the captain "of your salvation" in all your spiritual combats, and confiding in him as your spiritual King, that he will both succour you now, and reward you hereafter.

7. Labour to give a demonstration of your spiritual birth and growth, by your abounding in *the fruits of the Spirit*; such as a chief regard to heavenly things; a venerable treatment of all things belonging to GOD; an habitual resignation to GOD's will, a christian temper in your affections and passions; a sober, thankful use of GOD's good creatures; the contempt of bodily pleasure and worldly gain, whenever they are contrary to the will of GOD and the interest of the soul; a delight in doing good to all men; patience under affronts, afflictions, and wrong sufferings; and punctual truth and justice in all your dealings; and, in short, such an undissembled zeal for GOD,

GOD, and care to pleaſe him, as may honour your heavenly Father in all places, and be a viſible proof of your integrity before all men: and whenever you find your pious deſires and reſolutions begin to flag, conſider that this life and this world are paſſing away, and that an eternity of rewards and puniſhments is at hand. The Judge of all will ſoon appear, and will "render to every man according to his works;" and then the faithful will be for ever bleſſed, and the ſlothful for ever accurſed; which ſhould make us unwearied in well-doing, ſince within a little time, "we ſhall reap, "if we faint not." And remember, that in order to fortify your zeal and conſtancy in all chriſtian duties, you muſt not preſent yourſelf again to be Confirmed by the Biſhop, as the manner of ſome ignorant people is. But,

8. You muſt now, without delay, prepare for a due receiving of the Lord's Supper, which will be of great uſe to you, to ſtrengthen you in your holy purpoſes, and to advance your progreſs in all the parts of chriſtian holineſs; for hereby your memory will be refreſhed in all the moving circumſtances of your Saviour's ſuffering for you; which cannot but affect every ſenſible heart; ſo that your *love to God* will be likely to be mightily invigorated hereby, and *your faith in Chriſt* greatly ſtrengthened, and your ſpiritual union with him more confirmed, and your title to all the benefits of his death more and more cleared and inſured. We have in this bleſſed ordinance a commemoration

moration of that great and only ſacrifice, whereby GOD is reconcileable to ſinners; and in it, that grace, mercy, and peace, which our Redeemer has purchaſed by his death, is communicated to the ſpiritual and faithful receiver: "for the bread which we break, and "the cup of bleſſing which we bleſs, are the "communion of the body and blood of Chriſt;" that is, a communication of all that Chriſt procured for ſinners by his ſacrificed body and blood, to the pious communicant, 1 *Cor.* x. 16. So that to neglect this royal banquet, or to come to it without ſuch ſpiritual diſpoſitions as are capable of receiving the benefits of it, is to deſpiſe our ſpiritual birthright and bleſſing, and to prepare our own ruin. And indeed, to be guilty of an habitual neglect of the ſacrament of the Lord's Supper, is in effect to declare, that we have little regard to our covenant with GOD in the ſacrament of Baptiſm, or to what we ſolemnly acknowledged and avowed at our Confirmation; for if we truly deſire to continue in thoſe vows, we ſhall be glad of an opportunity to renew and eſtabliſh them. So that there is a great degree of apoſtacy from the vows of Chriſtianity, in a total abſtinence from the Lord's Supper; which is the moſt diſmal condition that we can fall into; as we ſhall ſee in the ſecond thing which I propoſed to your conſideration.

II. *The*

II. *The dreadful case of such as apostatize from their Christian Vows.*

Such as are confirmed by the Bishop, do thereby expressly declare before GOD, and the governors of his church, that they are come to a positive and advised determination for the ways of GOD, in opposition to all the ways of sin. This they then solemnly vow to GOD, and openly profess before the assembly of his people; upon which they have imposition of the hands of the Bishop, and the prayers of the congregation, that they may obtain grace of GOD so to do. And alas! how odious must the dissimulation be, and how dreadful the guilt, where these holy and solemn engagements are wilfully broken, for the sake of any worldly and carnal lust! What is this, but to prevaricate with GOD, to mock his ministers, and to profane his ordinances?

GOD forbid, my dear Youth, that this should ever be your wretched case, for then nothing but horror and wrath, and shame and darkness will attend you. You will not then be able to think of GOD, without *fear and trembling*, nor to look into your Bible, without reading your doom. You will not be able to think of death and the judgement to come, without amazement; nor to behold GOD's ministers, and your pious friends, without considering them as so many witnesses against you in the last day; and your own conscience will often remonstrate these things to you, in

a

a very terrible manner, except it be utterly hardened in ſin, which is by far the worſt caſe of the two. And that which will extremely aggravate your miſery is, that you had once the hope of heaven, but loſt it by your own fooliſh and pernicious doings. You went from waſhing to wallowing in the mire. You broke from the embraces of a gracious Saviour, and put yourſelf afreſh under the power of the devil. Your Redeemer accepted you as one of the Ranſomed by his blood, but you ſold yourſelf again to commit iniquity. You preferred the extravagant luſtings of your own fooliſh heart, before the counſels of the Spirit of wiſdom; and valued the tinſel gaiety of this preſent world, before the ſuper-excellent glory of the kingdom of GOD. It muſt needs be matter of unſpeakable vexation to the breaſt that is guilty of all this, which will have a long and ſad eternity to conſider, by what a height of folly and madneſs every deliberate ſin is uſhered in, and with what a depth of miſery and ſorrow it is ever attended. It muſt end in a very bitter repentance at the beſt, for otherwiſe it will plunge the ſinner into eternal *weeping and wailing*.

Take good heed therefore, my dear Brother, walk uprightly with your GOD, whoſe favour is our glory and bliſs, and whoſe wrath is the utmoſt degree of our unhappineſs.

As you have therefore taken the profeſſion of the Chriſtian religion upon you, which is the beſt and pureſt in the world, ſee that you labour

labour to adorn it, and to preſerve the infinite hopes of it, that you may be for ever bleſſed.

We find in the *Greek Ritual* a moſt affectionate exhortation to this purpoſe, which was uſually read to ſuch as were Confirmed, to quicken their utmoſt care and concern to live ſuitable thereunto, in theſe words; 'The 'bonds are now ſealed, and Chriſt hath re-'ceived them into heaven. See then that ye 'mind your promiſe, and fulfil your engage-'ments, which will be openly read at the day 'of judgement. Take heed that there be no 'occaſion to bluſh at Chriſt's dreadful tribu-'nal, where all the powers of heaven tremble, 'and all mankind muſt ſtand to be judged: 'where the devil will be preſent to accuſe 'you, ſaying, "Lord, this wretch in word "renounced me, but was in deed my ſervant. "Then will the angels ſigh, and the holy "men will bewail your miſery. Your father "and mother cannot help you, and all your "friends will diſown you." GOAR. *Eucholog. Græc.* p. 342.

Be wiſe therefore, my dear Youth, whilſt there is hope, and keep your conſcience unſullied by the defilement of ſin, which will be great matter of comfort to you in life and death, as you will farther ſee in the next particular.

III. *The unſpeakable happineſs of ſuch as perſevere in the faithful diſcharge of their Chriſtian vows.*

The happineſs of ſuch is indeed unſpeakable, for they are in ſome meaſure reſtored to the primitive happy ſtate of man, which was loſt by ſin. And now the wrath of GOD is turned away by a gracious Redeemer, and the returning ſinner is taken into his good Father's boſom; now the perſon that was "alienated "from the life of GOD" by his corruption and rebellion, is made a partaker of the divine nature by ſpiritual regeneration, and is become "a fellow-citizen with the ſaints, and of the "houſhold of GOD;" yea, GOD is now his adopted Father; the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is Lord of all, is his Mediator and Advocate; yea, his root, his head, his ſtrength, and his life; and the holy eternal Spirit is his divine guide, and hope, and comfort; the holy angels of GOD are his continual guard, the book of GOD is the charter of his privileges, in which it is ſaid, "All is yours, becauſe ye are Chriſt's," 1 *Cor.* iii. 22. For ſince "all things in heaven, "in earth, and in hell, are made ſubject to "Chriſt," all things in heaven and earth will be ſerviceable to Chriſt's members, that is, his people; and nothing on earth or in hell, can in any wiſe hurt them. They have a new right to the enjoyment of all GOD's Creatures, yea, to the enjoyment of GOD himſelf for ever.

And

And O, how ſweet and pleaſant, my Brother, muſt ſuch a religious courſe of life aſſuredly be! in which the bleſſed Spirit of GOD conſtantly bears you company, the holy angels of GOD continually attend you, and every ſtep you take, advances you nearer to GOD's heavenly kingdom! And what an unſpeakable comfort will it be to you, whenever you look back upon a life thus happily ordered, and upon your talents thus advantageouſly laid out? Then every night will afford you the noble joy of a day ſpent in the ſervice, and to the glory of your Maker; and the ſerenity of your mind, and the peace of your conſcience, will be a conſtant relief to you under any outward diſtreſs. And when the happy hour comes, in which you muſt die, your heart may even leap for joy, to think that now your warfare is accompliſhed, and that your great work is not now to be begun, but to be concluded. Then you may with comfort conſider your Chriſtian Confirmation, wherein you ſolemnly devoted yourſelf to GOD, as ſoon as you came to the uſe of your reaſon, and that you have conſcientiouſly obſerved your engagements to GOD, in the chief bent of your heart, and courſe of your life; or have truly repented, and effectually returned to your duty, wherever (through the frailty of human nature) you have done otherwiſe. You may then, I ſay, very chearfully ſhut your eyes from beholding the things of this preſent world, in order to open them to ſee GOD in a better ſtate.

And

And though you will certainly meet with ſundry temptations and difficulties in your way to heaven, and perhaps with cruel mockings, or more bloody perſecutions, whilſt you ſojourn amongſt ſuch as are enemies to GOD, and bear evil will to *Sion*; yet be of good chear, your Redeemer has *overcome the world*, and will not ſuffer the meaneſt ſheep of his fold to be loſt. Keep ſteadfaſt to *the Captain of your ſalvation*, all will do well.

IV. *The Concluſion.*

And now, my dear Youth, I here moſt ſolemnly charge and require you, by the authority of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and in the preſence of GOD, who ſearches the hearts of all men, and will ſpeedily adjudge us all to everlaſting bliſs or torment, that you carefully keep your Chriſtian vows in remembrance, and that you ſeriouſly endeavour to adorn your holy profeſſion, and to honour the divine author of it.

Your hope of everlaſting life, my Brother, depends upon your faithful diſcharge of this your Covenant with GOD, through the mediation of his Son, and ſanctification of his Spirit. Wherefore "be ſtrong in the Lord and "in the power of his might," wherein you will truly anſwer the end of your Confirmation.

Be ſure you look not back with a wiſhful longing after the impurities of other ſinners, but *flee all youthful luſts*, with an heightned indignation,

indignation, and be ſure that you never enter into a parley with the devil, about the commiſſion of any Sin. If you once come to doubt whether you had beſt keep on in your integrity, or accept the bribes of ſin, you begin to revolt from GOD, becauſe the vigour of your reſolution for GOD is ſlackened; and that which decays, is going apace towards ruin.

Wherefore be you ever aſſured, that there is *death* and *deſtruction* in all the ways of ſin; for which, no temporal enjoyments can make you any amends. Keep firmly in this aſſurance, and, with *Job*, "retain your integrity "till you die;" and remember that the time of your labour can be but ſhort, and that your future recompence will be everlaſting.

And now, my Brother, "I commend you "to GOD, and to the word of his grace, which "is able to build you up, and to give you an "inheritance among all them that are ſanctified." And may "the grace of our Lord "Jeſus Chriſt, the love of GOD, and the fellowſhip of the Holy Ghoſt, be with you "evermore." *Amen.*

A Prayer to be uſed in private by a perſon lately Confirmed.

O Infinite fountain of bliſs, and Father of mercies! who art, by Jeſus Chriſt thy Son, reconciling the world to thyſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes; I moſt ſincerely bleſs thy

thy holy name, that theſe glad tidings ever entered into mine ears. For I lay in darkneſs, and in the ſhadow of death, as the reſt of mankind did, till the day-ſpring from on high viſited us, through the incarnation of our Redeemer; and in thy bleſſed goſpel, revealed by him, we behold moſt aſtoniſhing expreſſions of thy good-will towards men and of thy compaſſion towards ſinners, particularly that infinite condeſcention and love of thine, towards the penitent believers in thy Son and goſpel, wherein it pleaſes thee to enter into a covenant of life and peace with them. In the humble acceptance of this great vouchſafement of thine has my ſoul deſired to approach unto thee, and to apply itſelf to thee in a moſt humble confeſſion of my polluted and periſhing condition; and in the moſt thankful acknowledgment of thine unſpeakable mercies in our Redeemer, being led thereunto, as I truſt, by thy grace. To thee, O moſt bleſſed and eternal Trinity! in whoſe name I was baptized, to thee have I now, by ſolemn Confirmation, afreſh devoted myſelf, with all my powers and intereſts, according to the bleſſed terms of my baptiſmal covenant.

Good GOD, enable me faithfully to perſevere in the ſame. Let nothing in this world draw and drive me from a ſtate of favour and communion with thee and thy Son Jeſus Chriſt, through the preparations of the Spirit of Holineſs. Thy favour, O my GOD, is

better

better than life, and the communications of thy Spirit, more to be eſteemed than all worldly treaſure. Thy ſervice is perfect freedom, and thy laws the moſt wiſe directions of human life, and the ſure paths to eternal bliſs. O Lord, vouchſafe to ſtrengthen, ſtabliſh, and ſettle me in the practice of them for ever. And to this end, be pleaſed to mortify my ſinful luſts and paſſions, through thy Spirit, and to countermine all the malice of infernal Spirits againſt me, and to keep me undefiled by this preſent evil world; that being, through thy grace, faithful unto death, I may through thy mercy attain eternal life, through Jeſus Chriſt our only Mediator and Advocate, in whoſe prevailing name and comprehenſive words I farther pray;

Our Father, &c.

4 OC 58

FINIS.

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